



## Executive Committee Meeting – 15-01-2021

Attendance: SWC (President), MW (FCO), MP (VP), SS (Social Chair), JS (PG&M), ES (Senior Welfare), BT (JCR Chair), TB (Sports & Socs), MF (Facilities), LB (Outreach Chair), LH (Communities Chair)

Absent: RM (PR Officer), ER (Librarian),

Location: Zoom call

### Agenda:

COVID fund (SWC)

Updates/Events/JCR Engagement/Elections (SWC)

Auto-VONC (Vote Of No Confidence) (MP)

AOB

\*Minutes from last term's Exec meetings pass\*



SWC Another strange term upcoming. Let me know if you need anything.

### COVID fund (SWC)

SWC Me and MW have considered releasing money for students badly affected. Can be given out quite broadly. We might buy our own laptops. We could potentially repurpose the Library budget money. We could see what people applied to use with. I recognise that this is kind of beyond what the JCR usually stands for. The one thing that JCRs don't really get involved with is the academic side. We do have a lot of money to spend. Is this beyond what we should be doing?

SS It depends on the policing of what we give it to.

SWC Participation fund is entirely non-means tested. This lack of bureaucracy is a benefit.

SS Concerned that people would apply for ridiculous stuff. Would we have a specific agenda?

SWC It is unprecedented. Everyone needs different things. Hard to know what students need. We'd create a panel (Likely me MW, and one or two others). Unlike the Participation fund we'd have a relatively hard deadline.

MP I like the idea, but I think we should strongly prioritise buying useful things as a JCR and then loaning them out – we could surely get usage from (for example) a router for a few years, whereas if we just buy it it's going to a landlord in a few months.

SWC We could just call it a fund? That way we could sort of build up a bank. We could assess case by case.

MP How does our usual *no consumables* policy interact with this?

SWC There have to be boundaries. I'd love to have a fund where people can just get money, but it'd hemorrhage too quickly. Internet access is so important for wider student experience, but we can't cover people's food and rent.

MF Isn't the uni doing something similar? £500 for financial difficulties?

SWC The criteria is quite tough and bureaucratic. Partially we are doing it because we have a lot of money. There can be other large expenditures too. We'd do a free cuth's day if that goes ahead.

MW But let's not put our eggs in that basket. We have to spend the excess money within this year.

SWC This fund could be a £1000. It's not mutually exclusive with reducing prices. Like MW says we have this money and we need to start using it. Refund questions are starting to come in. Does everyone get the same value for money? No. In reality what you're doing is joining a pool that gets divided up. Not everyone will benefit.

SS In light of the convo we had for sports and socs – there are some sports and socs that could get some money to send things out.



SWC Yeah. We are doing equipments loans. If we send things by post it won't come back. To me everyone's struggling but there are concrete things we can do, such as the internet thing. It's not essential in the same way.

MP We should have a conversation with Social Comm about potential big spends that we could make that could improve events in the future (large tech purchases for example)

SWC RJ (FCO 19-20) did spend a lot last year. Happy to talk to committees that need equipment.

SS We could invest in online infrastructure – things like JackBox

SWC I was in a meeting where I was testing a new system – games on the phone – just to say the uni will be investing in a similar thing. Depends how feasible it is. Do you think that people would rather take a hit on membership and help people we can? It's hit and miss with the online stuff. These things might not be mutually exclusive.

MW I think it's a good idea as long as it is strongly within reason. I don't think it will be difficult, if there is tension, we can come back to the exec or go to the trustees.

SWC We could set aside a smaller amount of money and not make promises – play it by ear

MW If there's loads of interest we can bring it back.

LH University funding is strict. Can be really hard to get anything.

JS Applying for this already has a stigma – if the requests aren't typical, they are doing so because it's really a necessity. I don't think people would abuse it.

\*Generally happy to play it by ear\*

SWC If there is anything that needs investing, now is the time. Let us know.

## Updates/Events/JCR Engagement/Elections

TB Got the give it a go thing for promoting online events. Will have to play it by ear, see how.

MP As ever a huge one from me. Minutes are up on the website. Been to meetings. Stash order coming soon – but consider waiting until the Graduation stash order if you want to flex being a “Graduate 2021”. Sliders Update – due to logistics, and the company being really quite annoying, I do not think I will do these.

BT JCR meetings will be online as expected. I've already given the dates. Exec elections will have prerecorded husts. We're restructuring prizes too.

SWC Reminder to talk to people about running and the promotional Instagram posts we are going to do.



LH All minority reps have been planning events, all struggling with turnouts. A few campaigns planned. All of us care about the forum thing. Mailing list might be possible. Local students' Rep is planning on doing social media.

SWC If you can figure out mailing lists I'll give you a prize. We're negotiating a new Data Sharing agreement with the University – we could potentially get that by the end of the year.

JS Business as usual for me. A few different forums with various guests. Dates TBD. Anyone can come – would be nice if you're free. SM (SU PG Academic Rep) about whether to PG or not, we'll jump on that.

ES Pretty much back to online campaigning. 3 this term. Care packages are a possibility. A lot of it is talking to CI (Assistant Principal) and College, please do let me know any ways we can support students. Considering doing a few game shows instead of quizzes.

SS Could we hire a professional to assist with College Welfare?

ES We met about this with welfare officers across colleges – unfortunately this has to happen on a uni level – a lot of people aren't accessing the help available as its going remotely, so now might not be the time to expand anyway. I am part of a student support peer review group. I can bring that up.

MW Working on funds all I can do. Trying to support sports and socs that do have the opportunity to increase engagement. Spend spend spend.

LB We have bookclub on Sunday with library. We are starting a campaign across the term to show all the different charities. See if there's a care home link possible to help with feeling isolated. Try and set up something with Durham 6<sup>th</sup> Form. We could do a fundraiser, but it wouldn't be a huge event.

SS Don't know how this term will plan out. A few online things around a theme. Valentines day.

MF No facilities right now. Let me know if you need anything so I can help.



SWC Been quite busy but not getting anywhere. We're trying to open facilities for livers in. Tried to open library and the volunteers. I've been working on the new Memorandum agreement. Talking with the uni about online wider student experience. Trying to figure a way to send things back to them. Easier for livers in. For livers out if their housemates aren't willing to bring it out we can sort that. Trying to be helpful as possible. Some wider student representation. Talking about how the Uni Sees us and JCR presidents. Any questions let me know. That's the way things are going at the moment.

### Auto-VONC

MP Personally I really don't like the current auto-VONC system. I don't think we benefit as a JCR from motions being brought by me to kick off people who aren't necessarily bad at their role. I also don't particularly like the fact that I have to send out loads of emails (including, due to this meeting, two exec members who have given many hours of their time to the JCR) saying that people are at risk of having a motion brought against them. Does anyone have any thoughts on a better system, or if there is even any need for this in the first place?

SS I think the email should just be very nicely written. I don't like auto-VONC but I see it as necessary.

BT I think if we don't have this then sending apologies is a bit pointless.

SWC I think there's a middle ground where it's less work for the VP. People do need to realise their responsibilities. This entire organisation runs off people volunteering. It falls apart if we can't enforce it. As committee chairs the rest of the exec does need to play a role. Auto-VONCs do have to pass, so it isn't like people are just instantly kicked off. All of you as committee leaders. I think this does speak to our perception of the JCR. As committee chair you need to tell them they have to go to JCR meetings. The usual argument that everything is JCR and there is no separation applies. We are responsible for the JCR being coherent.

### AOB

SWC This term will be difficult. Last term we worked together well despite not being together. As always be and MW are here.

BT We're doing elections drop ins on the 27<sup>th</sup> – feel free to come along.